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For 1897.

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NOTICE.—To avoid delay in the execution of Orders it is particularly requested that all business communications be addressed to the Firm, A. S. WATSON & Co., or 827 HONGKONG DISPENSARY.

BIRTH.

On 2nd of June, at Amoy, the wife of Mr. J. W. DANIELSON, of a Son.

At Marseilles, on 2nd inst., by the Rev. A. L. O'NEAL, JAMES MATTHEWS, Esq., of Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, to GEORGINA, eldest daughter of R. F. MACLEOD, Esq., of Perth, Scotland.

DEATH.

At Restland House, Swatow, on the 4th inst., KATE EVELYN, youngest daughter of T. W. RICHARDSON.

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must be considered in the light of State papers, they are no doubt pardoned with unaltered interest by Chinese readers, while to foreigners they undoubtedly offer fresh insight into the character, customs, and habits of the people of the Central Kingdom. The Chinese, as is well known, are great admirers of filial piety, devotion, and self-sacrifice. In China, obedience to parents has always been esteemed a cardinal virtue. The teachings of the sages, the examples of history, as well as tradition and modern practice, all combine to place this duty in the foremost rank. It may be questioned, however, whether this virtue is not often more ostentatiously paraded than really practiced out of genuine filial reverence. Superstition, it is to be feared, and dread of being haunted by the shades of the dead departed, frequently have as much to do with the rendering of loyal obedience as a sense of duty or any extraordinary depth of affection. There are, however, many meritorious exceptions. The training up of children in such principles, the constant citation to them of virtuous examples from the classics, and the numerous monuments, erected in different parts of China in memory of some particular act of self-sacrifice on the part of loving sons or daughters, together with the influence of young China with a respect and love for its parents which the people of many more civilized nations unhappily fail to acquire.

The *Peking Gazette* of the 25th ultimo contains a rather singular memorial from the Governor-General of Chihli, in which he calls attention to the filial virtue displayed by a lady named Wang, daughter of a former Taidai official, and grand-daughter of a former President of the Board of Works, a native of the Kiao-yueh district in Kiangnan, the family having, however, resided at Ohoh Chow for a number of years past. From her earliest youth, the memorial states, this young lady has "exhibited a decorous propriety of conduct and a love of study. She was a diligent reader of Liu Hsiang's Lives of Virtuous Women, and the poem of Mu Lan. At the age of thirteen, when it was proposed to betroth her, at the first hint of this reaching her ears, she retired to her room, and drew with a pointed instrument blood from her arm, with which she wrote a sentence declaring her intention to remain single in order to devote herself to the care of her parents." But this act of devotion is only one of many by this high-minded girl, and the memorial proceeds to state that in 1852 her father and second brother having perished at the taking of Wu-chung by the rebels, on their remains being brought home she exclaimed, amid her tears, "that since she could not follow her father to the tomb, her mother being still alive, her blood should at least serve to vivify his coffin; and she gnashed her arm, heroupen, with a knife, allowing a stream of blood to mingle with the liquor of the coffin." After her father's obsequies had been completed, her relatives strongly urged her to marry, but she steadfastly refused, saying that she intended to bestow her undivided attention upon her mother. Her mother was attacked in 1852 with a dangerous illness, and this devoted daughter cut a piece of flesh from her left thigh to be administered as a remedy. Painful as this act of self-torture must have been, the girl did not shrink from repeating it, hoping that it would prove efficacious and give her parent relief, for the document goes on to state:—"In less than a year, a fresh attack of illness supervened and she cut a piece of flesh from the right thigh on this occasion, recovery ensuing as before. On subsequent occasions, when her parent was attacked with slight ailments, she applied tending incense, stick to her arms, and used the oil of her thigh to mingle with the remedies prescribed, with invariably successful results. After her mother's death, in 1872, she refused all sustenance during a period of three days, and was with difficulty persuaded at length to 'taste food.' Acts of self-sacrifice like this are usually appreciated in China and the memorialist winds up with the following eulogy on Miss Wang:—"The devotion and energy she has displayed exceed what might be expected from one of the opposite sex, and it is solicited, in view of the wide reputation which has been gained by her virtues at Ohoh Chow, that a monument may be erected in her honour under Imperial sanction." This strange account of what was undoubtedly most truthful and heroic conduct cannot fail to excite sympathy and compel admiration even from people who will naturally smile at the idea of a sliced of human flesh being administered as a remedy to a person in extremis. Filial devotion is obviously in a more advanced condition than medical science in China. In the latter respect the Chinese are indeed in a backward state. The rare idea of such a practice as that narrated above is of itself sufficient to draw a strong line of demarcation between semi-civilized China and the nations of the West. But while we are not naturally revolted from the barbarous and painful manner taken by Miss Wang to restore her sick mother to health, we are constrained to honour the motives by which she was actuated, and to glad to find that in a land where fraud, oppression, deceit, and callousness to suffering have no wide a way there are still some shining examples both of lofty courage and noble self-sacrifice.

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